

## Some Suggestions for Forming Groups

### **When forming groups, do not:**

- Allow students to form their own groups or deliberately create homogeneous groups.
- Establish groups that are either too small (3 or fewer) or too large (8 or more).
- Dissolve and reform the groups on a frequent basis, such as after each activity or simulation.

### **BUT DO...**

- Be sensitive to off-campus, commuting and/or non-traditional students
- Have some sort of ‘team-building’ exercise for the group when they are first formed - build cohesion early.

### **When formulating grading policies, do not:**

- Minimize the extent to which group performance affects students’ grades.
- Limit group work’s influence to less than 20% of the total grade (or base a very large proportion of the grade [60% or more] on a single assignment)
- Leave out any form of peer evaluation in the grading system

### **BUT DO...**

- Motivate students to work together by emphasizing the group grade
- Provide opportunities for students to evaluate their peers, before issuing final grades

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### **When providing feedback on group work, do not:**

- Structure the group assignments so that students can easily figure out a way to work independently to get the work done.
- Have the group work turned in as late as possible in the term.

### **BUT DO...**

- Remember that more work is not necessarily ‘group work’
- Set reasonable due dates for you and your students
- Allow students to make corrections and revisions to their work

### **When planning group activities and assignments, do not:**

- Assign two or more class presentations
- Assign four or more cases or other written reports
- Avoid group exams but do not give more than four
- Use the absolute minimum of class time for group work

### **BUT DO...**

- Provide students opportunity to meet with their groups in class at least once per week
- Check in with every person in the group regularly
- Balance the workload, remember that complex work is good for groups, not necessarily more work.

Adapted from Brown Fiechtner, S. and Actis Davis, E. “Why Some Groups Fail: A Survey of Students’ Experiences with Learning Groups” from Collaborative Learning: Sourcebook for Higher Education.